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EDITORIAL COMMENT



MEETINGS OF THE TWO NATIONAL SOCIETIES IN BOSTON

THE meetings in Boston, beginning with that of the American Society of Superintendents of Training Schools on May 29th, were occasions long to be remembered for certain definite conclusions. The superintendents' meetings were dominated by thoughts of advanced education rather than of the simple, practical, every-day affairs of the training school. Defects in our training school organization, methods of teaching, the unequal apportionment of theory and practice, the overwork of the superintendent of the smaller school, and the need of greater public enlightenment as to conditions existing in nursing education, were the impressions left on our mind.

Two papers by educators outside of nursing ranks were of absorbing interest,—those by David Snedden, Ph.D., Massachusetts Commissioner of Education, and by Miss Arnold, Dean of Simmons College,—we are promised these papers for publication. They were most encouraging, both speakers emphasizing the fact that training schools for nurses have been path breakers, and that though in our schools the practical teaching had been entirely out of proportion to the theoretical, the principle involved in combining the two was correct and is that which the promoters of vocational education in other fields are now attempting to follow.

The policy followed by the Superintendents' Society in the past decade has been one of silent effort, depending upon the promotion of higher educational and ethical standards for the enlightenment of the general public. Upon formal action by the society it was decided to seek publicity regarding the progress already attained in nursing affairs and

the requirements for the future, as has been done by the medical profession in matters of public health, through the medium of the popular press, and a committee was ordered to be appointed for that purpose, to select writers and to secure space in widely-read magazines. It would seem that in some particulars the efforts of the past had led round and round in a circle without solving the problems discussed.

The second definite course of action agreed upon was to ask some educational body entirely outside of either nursing or medicine to make a study of the training schools and of nursing education in general in this country, as was done for the medical schools by the Carnegie Institute. For this purpose, also, a committee was appointed.

All the papers read were of unusual excellence and the discussions interesting. That on the eight-hour day, and that following Miss Noyes' paper on "Some Problems Arising in Affiliation between Training Schools," showed how widely important these subjects have become.

It is quite impossible to give any adequate idea of such a meeting. The secretary's report will give the outline, but the proceedings, with the stenographer's report of the discussions, may be obtained by nurses outside the association who place their orders early with the secretary.

Miss Riddle was a most gracious and efficient presiding officer. The meetings were notable for the harmony and cordiality which prevailed. Of the social features, that longest remembered, probably, will be the reception at Newton Hospital, ten miles out in the country, which was reached by special cars and, to a favored few, by automobile. The setting of this hospital in the midst of beautiful country, with ample grounds, detached buildings and an ideal nurses' home, over which Miss Riddle reigns supreme, made it an indescribably delightful affair. (This training school never has a shortage of probationers.) Aided by a committee from her board of managers, Miss Riddle entertained her guests with music, and with refreshments which were served in the parlors of the nurses' home. The house was a bower of beautiful flowers, largely gathered from the gardens and the woods, and it was all an education to those members who only know hospitals and training schools as great city institutions.

The dinner given by the Massachusetts State Nurses' Association to the delegates of both conventions, brought together, with the possible exception of the banquet at San Francisco, the largest group of nurses ever dining together in this country, and was an inspiring sight. Here again were exquisite flowers, music, and appropriate toasts from interesting speakers, with an opportunity for that sociability which is so important a feature of these gatherings.

THE AMERICAN NURSES' ASSOCIATION

At the Boston meeting, the American Nurses' Association was adopted as the title of our national association, in place of the Nurses' Associated Alumnae of the United States.

The important business before this 14th annual convention, which convened at the Park Street Church on May 31, was the reorganization of the association and the adoption of the new by-laws. One entire session and the greater part of another were given up to an impartial and careful deliberation of every point presented, and the conclusions reached were in almost every instance unanimous.

The clause on membership was the most difficult of adjustment, although the committee had modified it greatly since mailing copies of the proposed amendments to the members and publishing them in the *JOURNAL*. As finally adjusted, it reads as follows: "Any state, county, or city association, or one of national character, which shall be approved by the Eligibility Committee, shall be eligible for membership. Any alumnae association from a school giving its pupils three years' training in a hospital, or giving an equivalent training in a professional school and hospital, or in one or more hospitals, shall be eligible to membership."

One of the disputed questions of the past has been what constitutes permanent membership. The by-laws are now changed to state with unmistakable plainness that after being sent once as a delegate, and attending two consecutive meetings thereafter, a nurse becomes a permanent member with power to vote at the third meeting.

The proposition to hold biennial instead of annual meetings was lost, it being the voice of the convention that we shall continue to hold annual meetings.

Because of the increase in the cost of carrying on the work of the association, in the first place, and because of the continuance of the annual meetings, the proposed increase in dues was adopted without a dissenting voice. The dues of the alumnae associations affiliated are increased from 10 to 15 cents per capita. State associations are taxed a flat rate of ten dollars a year, and may be represented by their president and one delegate. City and county associations pay the same as states if their membership is above fifty, below that number the rate is \$5, and they are allowed one delegate. Permanent members pay two dollars a year. This seemed, after very full and free discussion, to be the fairest distribution that could be made of the cost of carrying on the association.

The phrase "associations national in character" in the membership clause is intended to apply to such associations as the Spanish War Nurses or the Superintendents' Society, should they wish to apply for affiliation, or to any similar national body of nurses of good standing.

One important change made in regard to nominations is that permanent and charter members are to receive nominating blanks and share with the associations the right of submitting names to the nominating committee,—two names for each office to be returned instead of one,—and the nominating committee is given discretionary power in making up the ticket from the names submitted.

Announcement was made by the president that the JOURNAL Purchase Fund is now so nearly completed that appeals for contributions would not have to be made again, but the transfer would be adjusted between the directors of the association and of the JOURNAL after the pledges now in hand have been fulfilled, though associations that have had no share in this fund and who wish to help in the work of the ownership may still send voluntary contributions for a short time.

Miss Hay having resigned from the chairmanship of the Robb Memorial Fund, Miss McIsaac was appointed by the committee to serve in her place. It was shown that more than \$5000 had already been contributed, and pledges were given at this meeting which increase this sum materially.

But the surprising event of the convention was the adoption of the recommendation of the committee on pension or relief fund, which was practically along the lines recommended by this JOURNAL in the March issue, that we begin the accumulation of a fund, to be held by the American Nurses' Association, and leave the details of its management and development to be worked out later. Immediately nurses from all parts of the room were on their feet, all eager to be heard, and in fifteen minutes nearly \$1800 was pledged with an enthusiasm which showed how strongly the members felt the need of a fund to draw from for disabled members. This is to be known as the Emergency Relief Fund, unless a better title shall be found later, and is not intended to take the place of the sick relief funds of the local associations but is to be for special cases of unusual need. The names of the members of the committee to receive the money for this fund will be published later. It is a matter for every association and for every nurse to be interested in, and we hope the delegates who were present will make a strong appeal that the amount may reach such proportions that we may begin to draw upon it within a year or two.

The development of the Robb Educational and the Relief Fund, as some one said, is not for the nurses of to-day alone, but will go on for many long years, and their purpose should be placed before every graduating class and be presented at every national and state association as a reminder of those obligations which we have assumed. These are legiti-

mate causes for which nurses may solicit aid from outside people or give entertainments of various kinds for raising money.

The papers were fewer in number than usual because of the time needed for discussion of the by-laws, but those that were given were exceedingly interesting, all along the lines of social service, and will be read with interest when they are printed in the *JOURNAL* with the account of the proceedings. Two should be specially noted, the practical, well-thought-out method of teaching school children bodily hygiene and the dangers of tuberculosis, given by Miss Helbert, of Cincinnati, and the able address by Professor Winslow, of the College of the City of New York, on "The Rôle of the Visiting Nurse in the Public Health Campaign," which like the address from outside speakers in the superintendents' meetings, showed such comprehension of our educational progress that it was decided by the assembly to have reprints of the paper made which should be held by the secretary for general distribution, not only to nurses but to boards of managers and trustees of hospitals.

Mayor Fitzgerald in his address of welcome, and again at an evening gathering, spoke strongly in favor of the eight-hour system for pupil nurses.

The president's address was of a practical nature and much appreciated by her audience, particularly by those delegates who were attending the national gathering for the first time, for she told them what the duties of delegates are and how to make the most of the meetings for themselves and for their societies.

The social gatherings of most note were the banquet, already referred to, and the Red Cross reception which, though for Red Cross nurses only, was largely attended, showing how wide-spread is the enrolment. It was a delightfully informal occasion where, under the national and the Red Cross flags, and to the strains of music, Red Cross nurses had an opportunity to meet their president, the members of the national and state committees and, not least in importance, each other. It was an enthusiastic and beautiful throng.

The reception so graciously given by the Guild of St. Radegonde at Boston College was unusual in character and most enjoyable. Special cars were sent to the hotel for the invited guests and when the college was reached an interesting programme of music and speeches was provided, refreshments served, and a social evening enjoyed.

Two clinics were a feature of the convention, one at the Massachusetts General, the other at the Children's Hospital, both institutions providing a most valued opportunity for the visiting nurses to be put in touch with latest methods in the subjects demonstrated. The visitors were taken about the hospitals afterward, and those delegates who had

time to do so accepted some of the many invitations given by other hospitals and societies in the city which were so numerous, so cordial, and so inviting that they were bewildering.

With all their other plans, the Boston nurses did not forget that the city and surrounding country are the greatest treats they have to offer, and nurses were taken about to the historical points in and about the city as their guests, so that no one need return to her home and say she had not seen Boston or Concord or Cambridge. All must have felt deeply grateful to those who had done so much for their pleasure, their comfort and their instruction.

We must not close this little résumé of the meetings without expressing the pride felt by all in the large gathering; even the far-away points were well represented, California having five delegates present, Washington two, Texas two, and we were told that a nurse was present from Alaska. Certainly all the country in between these points had nurses present.

SUGGESTIONS FOR NEXT YEAR

The fact that announcements were made from time to time from the chair that different groups of workers would hold informal conferences at luncheon or between sessions would seem to emphasize the wisdom of giving one session of the national convention to sectional gatherings where workers in special fields would have opportunity to come together, to meet each other, and to discuss their common problems. Such groups might gather as private nurses, those interested in the care of the insane, school nurses, magazine boards and editors, state officers, boards of examiners, training-school inspectors, nurses engaged in tuberculosis work or in child welfare, visiting nurses, those doing social service work for hospitals, missionary nurses, registrars of directories, and any others. It would be interesting to hear through our letter department the opinion of nurses in general as to the advantage to be gained by such conferences.

Both societies are to meet in Chicago next year, with Miss Wheeler, of that city, president of the Superintendents' Society and Miss Sly, of Detroit, of the American Nurses' Association.

THE INTER-STATE SECRETARY

At the Boston meetings, Miss McIsaac, the Inter-State Secretary, was reappointed to serve for another year. The account of her proposed itinerary will be found in the official department, but from comments which we heard at the convention, we realize that many nurses do not yet understand just what place in nursing affairs the Inter-State Secretary holds.

First we want to emphasize the fact that the salary of this officer is divided equally between the organizations sending her out,—the Red Cross, the Superintendents' Society, the American Nurses' Association, and the JOURNAL. Her travelling expenses, as has been explained many times, are divided between the associations,—state, county, alumnae, or the training schools, that invite her to address them. *She does not volunteer her services but responds to such invitations as she receives.* As is explained in her announcement, for the sake of conservation of her strength, of time, and of money, she should not be requested to rearrange her schedule or to retrace her steps during the year.

Since the first official appointment of an inter-state secretary, a position held by Miss Sly for several years without compensation, and which Miss McIsaac now enters for a second term, we have made wonderful strides in organization and in educational development. It is not always possible to discover the source from which an impetus comes, but the fact remains that since we have had a field secretary nursing affairs have progressed with much greater rapidity than ever before.

The appointment of this secretary in the first place was for the direct purpose of rendering aid to states that were in the throes of legislation, with the object of making the laws for state registration as uniform as possible. While the direct need for that kind of advice has passed, there is still the equally important matter of the work of the boards of examiners. Miss McIsaac, after her experience of last year, is in a position to give valuable advice along these lines, and wherever it is possible, such boards should arrange for a conference with her for a free discussion of problems whose solution will lead to greater uniformity and higher standards.

PROGRESS OF STATE REGISTRATION

WE publish in this issue, under their state headings, the text of the four bills which have become laws during the past legislative season.

The Idaho bill, which became a law on March 9, has a board of examiners composed of two nurses and one physician, appointed by the governor from a list of four nurses and two physicians submitted by the Idaho State Association of Graduate Nurses. The bill provides that the president of the board shall act as inspector of training schools. This bill is not mandatory.

The Vermont bill, approved on January 28, was introduced by physicians, and we infer from the information which has come to us that the nurses of the state knew nothing of it until it had become a law. The board of examiners is composed of two medical men in active practice on the staff of any hospital in the state having a training school for

nurses, and one graduate nurse holding a diploma from a training school giving not less than a two years' course in the theory and practice of nursing. Both doctors and nurse must have had at least three years' experience in the practice of their professions.

The Oregon law is in many ways one of the best yet secured, although it is not mandatory. It has a board of nurse examiners chosen from names sent to the governor by the Oregon State Nurses' Association. The remarkable thing about the experience of the Oregon nurses was the lack of opposition to the measure and the fact that the business of legislation, which was entrusted to Miss Linna G. Richardson, involved an entire expense, outside of printing, of but \$34. Here again the bill provides that the president of the board shall act as inspector of training schools. It was signed by the governor and became a law on March 15.

The bill for state registration in Tennessee became a law on April 5 after a hard and strenuous effort on the part of a group of nurses of the state, led by Lena A. Warner, president of the Tennessee State Nurses' Association. This is an excellent bill in many respects though many concessions had to be made during its passage which, as in so many other states, left it somewhat unsatisfactory to its promoters. The board of examiners is composed of five nurses, appointed by the governor, but each must have the endorsement of the society of trained nurses of which she is a member. The state nurses' association is not definitely indicated. This bill is mandatory.

The entire cost of legislation in Tennessee was \$140.

It will be remembered that six years ago the California nurses secured the passage of a bill for state registration in which provision was made for its administration by the Regents of the University of California. This law, for various reasons, has never been put into effect, and a measure was introduced during the past winter for the annulment of the original article and the passing of a substitute measure. This bill passed both houses of the legislature but has been left unsigned by the governor, with one hundred and fifty others, some of them of great importance as health measures. This leaves matters as they were, for the failure to sign the new measure leaves the old one still in force, and although the time for registration without examination has passed, an effort will be made to have the other provisions of the bill enforced.

The New Jersey bill passed the house without great opposition, but was killed in the senate, yet the nurses of the state are undaunted and will prepare for another conflict next year.

As we have had no report from Wisconsin, we infer that legislation there was unsuccessful.

THE NIGHTINGALE PLEDGE

IN the May JOURNAL we printed copies of the Hippocratic Oath and of the Nightingale Pledge and said we had been unable to trace the origin of the latter. Just too late for publication in June came a note from Mrs. Lystra E. Gretter, of Detroit, with the information desired, as follows:

"The Florence Nightingale Pledge was prepared by a special committee appointed by the Farrand Training School Committee of Harper Hospital, Detroit, in 1893. The committee consisted of Rev. William Davis, D.D., and three nurses, Miss N. E. Haight, Miss Louise T. Ford, and Mrs. L. E. Gretter. The pledge was first administered to the class graduated from that school on April 25, 1893, and it has been used by every other class since that date. The name was selected because it represents the highest type of nurse and an ideal."

DR. DALE'S ARTICLES

WE hope our readers, even though they may be too busy to read anything else, will make a careful study of the second paper of Dr. Dale's series on Moral Prophylaxis which appears in this magazine.

While we believe that early education on themes of sex hygiene will have a restraining effect upon a few intelligent young men of the more decent classes, we do not think such knowledge will make an appreciable difference in the habits of the great majority of men in any rank or class unless some penalty of publicity, such as Dr. Dale advises, is attached to the breaking of its laws.

The segregation of men and women suffering from venereal diseases in special wards in hospitals, and the reporting of all cases, whether innocently or viciously acquired, to the Board of Health, are a more practical solution of the problem. Until it is made as great a humiliation to have contracted any one of the venereal diseases viciously, as it is for a man to be arrested for stealing, we do not think education alone will wipe out this plague.

CARE OF INCUBATOR BABIES

IN the care of incubator babies, as in every other nursing procedure, there are different methods employed, depending upon the section of the country and the preferences of the physicians in charge. The paper published in this issue gives the result of the experience of one nurse, and differs in some respects from those obtained elsewhere. For instance, the habit of oiling a new-born baby and wrapping it in cotton is

considered dangerous by some obstetricians, as such a dressing tends to clog the pores of the skin.

The care to be given the eyes in regard to light is another disputed point. Our readers of several years back will perhaps recollect an article by Dr. Wescott, of Chicago, in which he states that many of the eye troubles of later years may be traced to carelessness in regard to shielding an infant's eyes during the first weeks of life. He stated that a baby should never be allowed to lie so that a direct light from a window or from a lamp should reach it, and that a nurse assisting at a birth should take special pains to protect the baby from the glare of light with which the lying-in room is usually flooded. He did not advocate a shaded room, but an avoidance of direct light to the eyes. If these precautions are necessary for the ordinary child, they would seem to us even more important to observe for the premature child which is so much more susceptible to every ill.

A FILE OF JOURNALS WANTED

THE New York State Education Department lost its file of the AMERICAN JOURNAL OF NURSING at the time of the fire in the capitol and would like to replace it. Dr. Henry L. Taylor, of the Department, has asked that a request for old JOURNALS be published in these columns. Nurses having back numbers of the JOURNAL which they would be glad to donate for public service are asked to write to Dr. Taylor at the Education Department, Albany, telling him which numbers they can offer, so that he may not receive duplicates.